

## 1.1 Introduction

This report is being submitted to the Legislative Counsel Bureau as required by NRS 444A.070, which requires the Director of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to submit a biennial report on the status of current and proposed programs for recycling and reuse of materials on or before January 31 of each odd-numbered year. Also included in this report is information that satisfies NRS 444.587, which requires NDEP to report to the legislature on the efforts to develop markets for products made from recycled materials.

This Recycling and Waste Reduction Report is prepared by the Recycling Coordinator at the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Environmental Protection. The report has been prepared on recycled content paper and placed in a report cover made from recycled material, as well. The report contains information about recycling in Nevada in 1997 and 1998 including tire revenue distribution, status of recycling by county, recycling rate information, recycling market development, and more. For information prior to 1997, please refer to previous recycling reports submitted to the Legislative Counsel Bureau since 1993.

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## 1.3 Review of Recycling Statutes

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As in previous years, the emphasis on solid waste activities in Nevada has been to get each county into compliance with state and federal landfill regulations. Through October 1997, most rural communities focused their attention on closing open dumps, providing drop-off boxes or transfer stations, and upgrading existing landfills. Recycling and waste reduction programs have not been a priority, or even at the forefront for most rural communities in Nevada. In Nevada's urban areas, where population centers are centralized and landfill requirements have been met, there are more recycling opportunities available to the public.

Several sections of the Nevada Revised Statutes contain information regarding recycling, purchasing recycled content products, solid waste statutes, etc., and the statutes contain a section that is entirely devoted to recycling, reuse and waste reduction. These statutes can be found in NRS 444A.010 through NRS 444A.110. One of the most telling statutes that identifies the status of recycling in Nevada is NRS 444A.040. This statute requires municipalities to establish different levels of recycling services depending upon their populations. Municipalities with over 100,000 people are required to provide curbside recycling, and household hazardous waste disposal programs. Municipalities between 25,000 and 100,000 are required to provide recycling drop-off centers, rather than curbside collection, and are required to provide household hazardous waste disposal programs. Municipalities below 25,000 are not required by statute to provide any recycling programs for their residents.

Two municipalities in Nevada currently have over 100,000 people (Clark and Washoe counties). Five counties in Nevada have a population over 25,000 but less than 100,000, and the remaining ten counties have populations below 25,000. In the last decade two additional counties have grown to exceed the 25,000 population threshold, however, they are not required to comply with NRS 444A.040. Population estimates used to determine compliance are that of the most recent decennial census, per NRS 0.050. Nevada now has seven counties that exceed the 25,000 population threshold, but they will not be required to comply with NRS 444A.040 until after the next census in the year 2000, if their population is still above 25,000.

Three counties in Nevada offer curbside recycling to their residents: Washoe, Carson and Clark counties. Although Carson City is below the 100,000 population threshold requiring curbside recycling, at the time the program was implemented, curbside recycling was required of a municipality of Carson's size. In 1991, when NRS 444A.040 was created, the statutes required municipalities with more than 40,000 people to implement curbside recycling. Elko and Douglas counties were close to 40,000 people at the time, and Lyon County has almost reached a population of 40,000 now. This statute was changed, however, during the 1995 legislative session and the population threshold for providing curbside recycling was increased to 100,000.

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## 2.1 County Recycling Information

### Carson City (County)

Carson City's recycling program offers curbside recycling collection, Christmas tree recycling, telephone book recycling and free household hazardous waste collection . Capital Sanitation provides curbside garbage and recycling collection in Carson City. Garbage collection is provided once a week while recycling collection is once every two weeks. Curbside trash and recycling collection is not mandatory and residents have the option to self-haul their garbage and recyclables to the Ormsby landfill. Although it is not mandatory, approximately 13,000 single-family households (and several apartment complexes) participate in the curbside garbage collection program, and about 60% of those participate in the curbside recycling program. <sup>1</sup>

Carson City offers homeowners curbside collection of telephone books and Christmas trees. Multi-family units that don't have curbside collection are provided with drop-off locations for recyclable materials. Recyclables collected in Carson City include aluminum cans, glass (clear, brown, and green), tin/steel cans, newspapers, magazines, and plastic bottles (#1 & #2). Cardboard is not collected at the curb, however, it is collected at the Capital Sanitation yard.

Carson City is fortunate to have a new program available to its teachers. "The Educator's Closet" is a reuse program, modeled after other reuse programs throughout the nation. This program accepts donations of unwanted items from businesses and individuals and makes these items available to teachers. This new program provides a valuable reuse opportunity for Carson City businesses and residents.

With funding from NDEP, Carson City Environmental Control provided educational field trips to over 1,000 Carson City third and fourth graders. These students, along with their teachers and staff from Carson City, visited the Ormsby Landfill and RSW Recycling in Reno. Students learned about the landfill, the importance of recycling, and were able to see how recycling works. A portion of the funding was used to place park benches made from recycled plastic in each elementary school in Carson City.

Many businesses in Carson City participate in Capital Sanitation's recycling program recovering many tons of office paper and cardboard. Several Carson City schools also participate

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and collect aluminum cans for school programs.

## Household Hazardous Waste

Common hazardous wastes found in the home (pool chlorine, lawn fertilizers, automotive wastes, paints & thinners, household cleaners, and more) are all known as household hazardous waste (HHW). Several years ago, Carson City developed a household hazardous waste program that has become a model for many other counties in this state. Residents may drop off HHW free of charge, by appointment, at the Carson City corporate yard. The HHW is separated and stored in 55 gallon drums, and when full, the drums are collected by a local hazardous waste disposal company. The hazardous waste company, Safety Kleen, provides on-site training to learn how to identify and categorize the collected waste. By collecting the HHW in this way, it is kept out of the landfill, off the ground, out of the drinking water and is disposed of properly.

Capital Sanitation was recently purchased by USA Waste, who later merged with Waste Management Inc. This purchase did not include the Ormsby landfill of which the majority is owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and leased by Carson City. Carson City owns 40 acres of the landfill and is attempting to purchase the remaining 170 acres from the BLM. Because this landfill is not privately owned, Carson City is able to require a greater number of recycling services from its contractor (Capital Sanitation). As a result, Carson City residents enjoy a greater number of convenient recycling opportunities.

## **Churchill County**

The majority of Churchill County does not have mandatory garbage collection; residents may self-haul to the Fallon/Russell Pass landfill. Residents within the city of Fallon are required to pay for curbside garbage collection service, provided by the city of Fallon. Three other disposal companies provide garbage collection throughout the remainder of the county. Churchill County does not offer curbside collection of recyclables, however, drop-off locations are available to residents in Fallon. Fallon Naval Air Station is required by federal law to collect recyclables on the base. In an effort to increase the amount of material collected, thereby increasing revenue, the Fallon NAS recycling coordinator provides drop-off bins in Fallon for residents to use at no charge.

## Household Hazardous Waste

The population of Churchill County is below 25,000, therefore, the County is not required to provide any type of collection of HHW. In the past several years, Nevada Cooperative Extension, partnering with the Nevada Division of Agriculture and Nevada GOLD provided an annual household hazardous waste collection day for Churchill County residents. This one day event, held at the Churchill County Fairgrounds, provided residents an opportunity to properly dispose of their HHW, free of charge. Many pesticides, fertilizers, and insecticides were collected including DDT, Chlordane, diazinon, mercury, and many other hazardous chemicals. These one-day, eight hour events were very popular with residents and in 1996, over 18,000 lbs. of HHW was collected, in 1997 over 24,000 lbs. of HHW was collected.<sup>2</sup> This program provided Churchill County residents with a way to properly dispose of their HHW in a safe and convenient manner. This program operated with grant funding and had been staffed by volunteers. There was no coordinated collection day in 1998. Those organizing this collection day hope to develop a permanent collection site that would be staffed several days a week.

Used oil is collected at several locations throughout the county and the new landfill, near Fallon, will accept lead-acid batteries.

### **Clark County**

Recycling services in Clark County are offered by various recycling businesses. Commercial recycling services are offered by several companies, while residential collection is provided by one company. Several buy-back centers are available for the public to use, as well.

Franchise agreements between Silver State Disposal and the cities of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas give Silver State Disposal the exclusive right to collect garbage and recyclables at curbside within most of Clark County. In Clark County, every homeowner, multi-family dwelling and public building or business is required, by city ordinance or county code, to pay for garbage collection. Curbside collection of garbage and recyclable materials is provided by Silver State Disposal and is offered to homeowners and some apartment dwellers. Homeowners may self-haul solid waste to a transfer station, however, they are still required to pay for curbside garbage and recycling collection. Garbage collection is provided twice a week to homeowners; recycling collection is offered once every two weeks. Items collected at curbside in Clark County include: aluminum cans, glass, plastic bottles (#1 & #2 only), tin/steel cans, newspapers, magazines, phone books, used motor oil and cardboard. As with all curbside recycling programs in Nevada, participation in the recycling program is optional.

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Approximately 300,000 homeowners in Clark County have the opportunity to participate in the curbside recycling collection program. Silver State Disposal reports that 265,000 of those 300,000 homeowners have requested bins and the participation rate varies anywhere from 15% to 36%, depending on the area of town being serviced. Recycling bins are provided to some multi-family dwellings, however those that don't have the service may take their recyclables to a recycling center.<sup>3</sup>

The franchise agreements allow other companies to either collect or accept source-separated recyclable materials from commercial businesses. While exclusive franchises may provide the area with reliable and economical waste disposal services, it puts strict limitations on recycling business development. These other recycling businesses collect and market recyclables from schools, businesses and other institutions. Several companies handle construction and demolition debris, others handle food waste from casinos and restaurants, while others collect cardboard, plastic, aluminum, metals and other commonly recycled commodities.

In July 1997, Silver State Disposal was purchased by Republic Industries, a Florida based corporation and is now known as Republic Silver State Disposal. The level of service has remained the same since the buy-out and there appears to be no change in operations.

### Household Hazardous Waste

Household hazardous waste found in the home can be disposed of properly at the Silver State Recycling Center in North Las Vegas four days a week. This program is available to all Clark County residents at no charge. There are many other places within Clark County that accept used motor oil from the public and several places that accept antifreeze.

### University of Nevada Las Vegas

The University of Nevada Las Vegas operates an extensive recycling program. There are many creative recycling, waste reduction and reuse opportunities that UNLV takes advantage of including food waste recycling in the dining commons, and reduced fees for beverages purchased in reusable cups. Additionally, items left behind by students in dorms are sold at yard sales and the money generated by these sales provides funding for the UNLV Rebel Recycling Program. UNLV's recycling program coordinator collects and markets the materials herself to local recycling businesses. Recently, with funding from NDEP, UNLV expanded their cardboard recycling program and has collected over 34.5 tons of cardboard since July 1998.<sup>4</sup> UNLV is one

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of many universities in the United States with an assertive and successful recycling program, and the only campus in Nevada with such a comprehensive recycling program. With assistance from the Rebel Recycling Coordinator, UNLV's purchasing department recently developed a "buy recycled" policy for remanufactured toner cartridges. This university recycling program has been a model for other campus programs.

For approximately two years, with funding from NDEP, UNLV operated "Innovations in Reuse for Education" This reuse program solicited donations of unwanted items from businesses in Clark County. These items were made available to teachers for use in their classrooms. The value of donated items exceeded \$55,000 in the first year alone. Many items were donated to this popular program including mouse pads, cameras, fabric, carpet squares, upholstery samples, art supplies, dishes, office supplies and much more. This program provided an excellent reuse opportunity for items that were no longer useful to businesses and would have been landfilled. Donations by businesses provided a tax write-off and made available an enormous amount of usable "stuff" for teachers. Unfortunately, the coordinator of this program was offered another job and had to discontinue the program. The Clark County School District was asked if they would be interested in continuing the program but they declined. This program no longer exists and the Rebel Recycling Coordinator gets many calls from businesses and teachers asking about the status of the program.

### **Douglas County**

With the exception of the town of Minden, Douglas Disposal provides curbside garbage collection throughout Douglas County. The town of Minden has mandatory garbage collection with service provided by the town of Minden. Curbside garbage collection is not mandatory throughout the rest of Douglas County and residents may self-haul their trash to the transfer station. Douglas County closed its landfill and has a privately operated transfer station next to the site of the old landfill. Recycling services are available at the entrance to the transfer station and newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, tin/steel, #1 & #2 plastic and brown, clear and green glass are accepted at the recycling center.

During the past two years, Douglas County has made improvements in the number of recycling opportunities offered to its residents. Douglas County includes areas in the Carson Valley, the Topaz area and a portion of Lake Tahoe. In Carson Valley, although curbside garbage collection is offered, curbside recycling is not. Residents of Douglas County must take

recyclables to the transfer station on Pinenut Road or take them to a mobile recycling trailer on specified days of the month. This is not convenient for many Douglas County residents and for years, NDEP has received telephone calls from Douglas County residents wanting more convenient recycling opportunities available to them.

With funding from NDEP in 1998, Douglas County Community Development purchased a multi-unit recycling bin and placed it near the Smith's grocery store in Gardnerville. This unit will provide a more convenient recycling opportunity for residents living in the Carson Valley.

Douglas County residents at the north end of the Valley are provided with access to a mobile recycling trailer parked in front of Silver City RV Park every other Monday. Many residents in the Jacks Valley/Indian Hills area find this to be inconvenient, if not impossible, to take advantage of as the recycling trailer is only available during traditional work hours. With the continued growth in this area, Douglas County could please many residents and increase their recycling rate by providing a regular recycling drop-off center in the Jacks Valley/Indian Hills area.

Douglas County residents at Lake Tahoe are serviced by South Tahoe Refuse and are provided with curbside collection of garbage and recyclables; Douglas County residents at Lake Tahoe are not required to separate their recyclables from their trash. South Tahoe Refuse operates a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in South Lake Tahoe which processes municipal waste, known as a "dirty MRF". At the MRF, every bag of trash is opened and workers on a sort line recover recyclables from trash.

Douglas County is also home to two of Nevada's first large scale compost sites. Full Circle Compost and Bently Agridynamics, both located in Minden, process organic waste. Full Circle Compost accepts yard waste, pumpkins and wood wastes from the public, and Bently Agridynamics accepts wood waste from the Tahoe Basin. These "wastes" are mixed with cow manure and minerals to produce high quality compost. In addition to keeping these organic wastes out of the landfill, the composting process produces a valuable commodity. High quality compost is sold to the public and has been used in several bioremediation projects in the area. Other uses of compost are being explored, as are additional ways to divert organic materials from landfills. The popularity of composting has increased throughout the nation in the past few years; NDEP is encouraging the development of legitimate composting operations throughout the state.

For the past several years Christmas trees have been collected at several drop-off sites located throughout the county. Some trees are chipped by the local parks department and others

are composted at Full Circle Compost.

## Household Hazardous Waste

In 1993, Douglas County was awarded \$37,000 to implement recycling collection programs. Using the remaining funds in 1998, Douglas County implemented a household hazardous waste collection program similar to Carson City's program. Residents call Douglas County Community Development and make an appointment to drop off their HHW, free of charge. The HHW is collected near the transfer station in a special shed designed for storing hazardous wastes. Again, Safety Kleen collects the HHW; the cost of disposing of material is subsidized by funding from NDEP.

## Elko County

Elko County has curbside collection of trash in some areas provided by several different companies. Ruby Mountain Disposal recently began garbage collection in the Spring Creek area. This company hauls trash to the landfill in Elko, the only permitted landfill in Elko County. The City of Elko provides curbside garbage collection to its residents. This service is provided twice a week by Elko Sanitation; they too, haul their waste to the Elko landfill. West Wendover is serviced by Ace Disposal, a company out of East Wendover and their trash is hauled to Tooele, Utah. There is no curbside recycling offered in Elko County and very few recycling services exist.

For the past several years, the City of Elko has been working with Hamilton Manufacturing, out of Twin Falls, Idaho to provide recycling services. Hamilton Manufacturing responded to a request for proposals issued by the city of Elko to provide recycling collection services in Elko County. An early proposal included a \$2.5 million dollar Material Recovery Facility (MRF) which would have been built on city-owned land set aside at the landfill. In anticipation of building the MRF in Elko, Hamilton Manufacturing provided recycling collection services to Elko County residents. A once-a-month community recycling day was held and residents could recycle newspaper, office paper, cardboard, and even were able to participate in curbside Christmas tree recycling. As time went by, and no agreement could be reached, Hamilton Manufacturing submitted scaled-down versions of their original proposal. The last proposal submitted was to build a buy-back center on city land. The city of Elko rejected the proposal and as a result, Hamilton Manufacturing cut back on recycling collection services offered

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in Elko County. Because of this, there are very few recycling opportunities available to Elko County residents. At one time, Elko County even had a recycling committee, however, the efforts of this group are now suspended.

For a short period of time, curbside collection of yard waste (tree trimmings and grass clippings) was offered to City of Elko residents but that program has been discontinued, as well. Yard waste is now accepted at the landfill at no cost to residents but they must haul it there, themselves. This organic material is put through a grinder and made into mulch. At this time, residents do not have access to the ground-up organic material, however this may change in the near future. Some of the mulch has been used by the city of Elko Parks Department, but the supply of mulch is exceeding the Parks Department demand.

The City of West Wendover has recently received a permit from NDEP to operate a municipal solid waste compost facility. This facility will process municipal solid waste and biosolids to provide compost for local residents and businesses. Composting municipal waste will significantly reduce the need to landfill while producing a usable commodity for the community.

### Household Hazardous Waste

There are no other household hazardous waste collection programs within Elko County. Automotive waste is accepted for recycling at the Elko landfill. Used oil, antifreeze and car batteries can also be dropped off at no charge.

## **Esmeralda County**

There are no recycling programs in Esmeralda County. With just a little over 1,400 people living in the county, and those residents being spread throughout the county, there is not a large volume of recyclable material generated in a central area. Additionally, the cost to transport any recyclables to market would be high. There is a possibility that a recycling collection area could be developed in Goldfield, as it is located on a major highway and is close to Tonopah.

### **Household Hazardous Waste**

With funding from NDEP, Esmeralda County is developing an automotive waste collection program. Used oil and antifreeze will be collected at Goldfield, Silver Peak, and Fish Lake Valley landfills. The used oil collected will be used as fuel for two waste oil heaters to be placed in county buildings. This project is expected to be completed by June 30, 1999. There are no other HHW collection programs within the county.

## **Eureka County**

There are no recycling programs in Eureka County. The most recent population estimate is just over 1,600 and this county is also located far from markets like other small, rural counties.

### **Household Hazardous Waste**

With funding from NDEP in 1998, Eureka County developed an automotive waste collection program at the landfill. Used oil, antifreeze and batteries are collected at the landfill at no charge to residents. Since May 1998, 170 gallons of used motor oil and 8 gallons of antifreeze have been collected from the public.

Empty 55 gallon drums, formerly filled with pesticides, are also collected at the landfill. The Department of Agriculture collects the empty drums from the landfill. There are no other HHW collection programs in the county.

## **Humboldt County**

There is no curbside collection of recyclables in Humboldt County and very limited recycling opportunities are available. Residents can recycle aluminum cans at several locations in Winnemucca and cardboard at one location. Grass Valley School is collecting plastic bags, and office paper in an effort to recycle those commodities.

## **Household Hazardous Waste**

This past year, with funding from NDEP, Humboldt County developed an HHW collection area at the Winnemucca landfill. Residents can drop off used oil, batteries, antifreeze, and paint, free of charge. There is one gas station in Winnemucca that will accept used oil from the public.

## **Lander County**

Recycling in Lander County is just about non-existent. In 1993, based on a proposal submitted by the County, NDEP awarded \$20,000 to Lander County to construct a recycling center. To date, this money has not been spent on recycling. There has been communication between the County Manager and NDEP's Recycling Coordinator concerning the obligations of this grant. According to the Lander County Manager, the county intends to develop a waste oil recycling site at the Battle Mountain Landfill. NDEP has been informed that Lander County is working with a consultant to prepare the site and purchase the necessary equipment. To date, however, no work has been performed and NDEP may request that the funds be returned.

## **Lincoln County**

Recycling services in Lincoln County are limited, as well. Two service stations accept used oil from the public, however, no other recycling services are available. Crestline Recycling and Disposal constructed a landfill in Lincoln County and only accepts Lincoln County Waste. Crestline Recycling and Disposal Company is not recycling in Lincoln County.

Another business in Lincoln County claims to be recycling construction and demolition

debris (C&D). This company is hauling C&D debris from Clark County and claims to be making mulch and composting the material. NDEP has found, however, that very little material has been shipped to markets and that the company is actually operating a disposal site without a permit. This company has been issued a Finding of Alleged Violation and Order and has been ordered to stop accepting material.

### Household Hazardous Waste

There are no collection or drop off HHW programs in Lincoln County. There are two gas stations that collect used oil from the public in Alamo and Caliente.

In 1997, Lincoln County responded to a Request for Proposals to develop recycling programs. NDEP developed a contract with Lincoln County to develop a waste oil recycling program but six months into the contract no work had been performed. Response from Lincoln County was minimal and in 1998, NDEP canceled the contract. No funds were disbursed.

### **Lyon County**

Lyon County has curbside collection of garbage in some areas with service being provided by Independent Sanitation. The county does not have curbside recycling collection but some recycling services are available throughout the county. Residents may drop off aluminum, glass, plastic, newspapers and tin/steel cans at the Sutro and Fernley transfer stations.

### Household Hazardous Waste

There are no HHW collection or drop off programs within the county. Automotive wastes (oil, batteries, and antifreeze) are accepted at the Smith Valley and Sutro transfer stations for no charge. There are several businesses throughout the county that accept used oil from the public.

## **Mineral County**

Mineral County does not have curbside recycling or drop-off programs for its residents. Newspaper can be dropped off at the Sierra Pacific Power Company and one business recycles scrap metal. The Hawthorne Army Depot recycles metal and has experimented with composting, but this is done on the base only. The composting projects are operated to remediate soil that contains hazardous materials. This composting operation does not produce a high quality compost to be used as a soil amendment and the soil is kept on the base.

### **Household Hazardous Waste**

There are no household hazardous waste collection or drop-off programs in Mineral County. The Hawthorne landfill accepts automotive waste (used oil, antifreeze and batteries) from the public at no charge.

## **Nye County**

There is curbside collection of garbage in Tonopah and Pahrump. In Beatty, some residents have curbside garbage collection, while others use drop boxes placed on corner lots. Pahrump Disposal provides garbage collection service in Pahrump; Hoss Disposal provides garbage collection in Tonopah, and Beatty is serviced by Beatty Disposal.

Nye County does not provide recycling services to its residents. In 1993, Nye County received a \$37,000 grant from NDEP to develop and provide recycling services. According to NDEP records, a portion of the funds were used to purchase thirteen dumpsters which were placed on a gravel pad surrounded by chainlink fence. This fenced area, located at the Pahrump landfill, is locked and inaccessible to the public. This project was not successful and NDEP is not satisfied that the funds have been accounted for.

## **Pershing County**

Residents of Lovelock have the option to pay for curbside garbage collection, provided by the City of Lovelock. Other Pershing County residents can pay for curbside garbage collection with Hoss Disposal or Desert Disposal. Those residents choosing not to pay for collection must

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self-haul their trash to the landfill in Lovelock or to transfer stations in Imlay, Unionville or Grass Valley. Newspapers are collected at the Sierra Pacific Power Company office in Lovelock; NDEP is not aware of any other recycling services available in Pershing County.

### Household Hazardous Waste

There is one service station in Lovelock that accepts used oil from the public. There are no collection or drop-off programs for household hazardous waste in Pershing County. In 1997, NDEP provided funding to Pershing County to develop a comprehensive used oil recycling program. The project included collecting used oil from the public at several locations around the county, including the landfill, and then burning the oil in a waste oil heater. The waste oil heater was purchased and installed, however, the waste oil collection component was not completed as outlined in the original proposal. On a recent visit to Pershing County, NDEP staff learned that the used oil collection component of this project has still not been fully implemented.

### Storey County

There are no recycling services available in Storey County. The Lockwood Landfill is located in Storey County, however, recyclables are not collected at the landfill. There are no household hazardous waste programs available in the county.

### Washoe County

Washoe County residents have curbside garbage and recycling collection available to them. Drop-off sites are available to the public, as well. RSW Recycling provides the curbside recycling collection. This service is offered to 84,000 single family homes, and of those, about 40% participate in the program.<sup>5</sup> Multi-family units (apartments and duplexes) generally do not have curbside recycling collection and may use the drop-off services provided in several locations throughout the county. Recyclables collected curbside in Washoe County include: aluminum cans, clear, brown, and green glass bottles, wine bottles, #1 & #2 plastic bottles, tin/steel cans and newspapers/magazines. This service is available in Reno, Sparks and Incline Village, and unincorporated areas of Washoe County.

Recently, USA Waste purchased RSW Recycling, Disposal Services, Sparks Sanitation,

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Independent Sanitation, B&L Disposal, and Refuse Inc., from Caramella/Ballardini, Ltd. USA Waste then merged with Waste Management, Inc. (WMI) and WMI now owns the controlling shares in the company. Although RSW Recycling retains the exclusive right to provide curbside recycling service, there are other businesses which accept recyclable materials and several buy-back centers that operate within Washoe County.

The state's largest organized effort of phone book recycling is operated in Washoe County. Nevada Bell telephone books are collected for recycling each year in many locations throughout northern Nevada. This collection program is organized by a local nonprofit organization working with RSW Recycling, Nevada Bell, and several businesses within the county. NDEP provides funding to support and encourage the continuation of this program.

Christmas trees are accepted for recycling at several locations in Washoe County. This collection program is organized by the same nonprofit organization that collects Nevada Bell telephone books. Most years, the trees are chipped and the mulch is used by the local parks department.

The integrated solid waste program in Washoe County is administered by the Washoe County District Health Department. In 1998, in an effort to focus on recycling, Washoe County District Health Department submitted a request to hire a full-time Recycling Coordinator for the county. This request was denied by the Washoe County Board of Health.

### Household Hazardous Waste

There is no organized collection program for household hazardous waste in Washoe County. Household hazardous waste may be taken to Laidlaw Environmental Services, Inc. in Sparks, however, residents must pay for this service at the time of drop-off. Incline Village residents are able to drop off HHW at the utilities yard in Incline Village, at no charge. This service was developed and continues to be subsidized by funding from NDEP.

Used oil, antifreeze and batteries are collected in many different places around the county including the transfer stations, gas stations, and some auto parts stores. In 1998, with funding from NDEP, Washoe County District Health Department provided 2,500 used oil recycling containers to "do-it-yourself" oil changers, at no cost to Washoe County residents. This program has been well received by the public.

In 1997, the Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID) adopted a “buy recycled” policy. This was the first official policy adopted by a public agency in the state. In addition, the Solid Waste Management Program of the Washoe County District Health Department developed a “buy recycled” policy which Washoe County adopted in February 1998. The county purchases re-refined oil, retread tires, recycled content paper, and many other recycled content products.

### **White Pine County**

White Pine County has very limited recycling opportunities available to its residents. Two private businesses in Ely accept some recyclables from the public. In 1993, White Pine County was awarded \$35,000 to build a recycling center, however, no recycling center has been constructed. In November 1998, White Pine County informed NDEP that the County had purchased a portable brush chipper for \$31,850 and wanted to apply this expenditure toward the grant. NDEP has requested more information, including a work plan, to determine if this purchase will improve recycling opportunities for White Pine County residents and determine if this expenditure is consistent with the goals of the grant program. No additional information has been received by NDEP at this time. Should this expenditure not apply or insufficient information be supplied, NDEP may consider asking White Pine County to return the funds awarded them in 1993.

### **Household Hazardous Waste**

There are no collection programs for household hazardous waste in White Pine County. Used oil and batteries are collected at the Ely landfill; NDEP is not aware of any location in White Pine County that accepts antifreeze.

### 3.1 Recycling Market Development

NDEP is required by NRS 444.587 to develop markets in Nevada for products made from recycled materials. This statute requires that NDEP determine the feasibility for the development of markets outside the state, and to provide producers of recycled materials with information relating to manufacturers of products made from those materials. Because NDEP staff do not have expertise in these areas, NDEP has attempted to develop a partnership with the Nevada Commission on Economic Development (NCED) to accomplish the above tasks.

In fiscal year 1998, NDEP pursued and developed a contract with the Nevada Commission on Economic Development to: “research and develop a state Market Development Plan; prepare the annual Market Development Report; produce a guide on where to buy recycling services and recycled content products; attend a conference on recycling economic development; and conduct recycling business attraction activities”. NCED hired a sub-contractor to perform this scope of work; the same person brought to Nevada by NCED in 1996 to work on recycling market development. Funding for this position was initially provided by a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency and later continued with funding from NDEP. A summary of the latest recycling market development efforts can be found in the 1998 Recycling Market Development Report, submitted to LCB in January 1998. In addition, the Recycling Market Development Plan is on file in NDEP’s office of Waste Management.

Recycling market development continues to be a challenge in Nevada. Some of these challenges include: providing an incentive to manufacturers who use recycled material to relocate to Nevada; convincing existing manufacturers to switch to recycled feedstocks; providing an incentive for those manufacturers continuing to use recycled feedstocks; low tip fees at landfills; a lack of businesses in Nevada that process locally recycled materials; long distances to markets for recycled material; and small quantities of good quality recycled materials available locally.

Challenges to recycling in Nevada , in general, include the cost to operate collection programs; the cost to prepare materials for transportation; and the cost to transport the material to a market. The associated costs are often higher than the revenue generated from the sale of the material. This problem continues in Nevada and in other rural states in the West. Some states have been successful using a cooperative marketing approach and Nevada attempted this in 1995. This effort was unsuccessful, however, as the contracted organization did not successfully complete the requirements of the grant.

If new and existing manufacturers in Nevada were encouraged to use locally recycled materials, the cost to transport materials would decrease and collection programs for the specific

materials may expand. NDEP continues to encourage recycling market development, when possible, and plans to work with US EPA Region IX to learn about successful strategies in other states. NDEP hopes to develop a contract with a skilled group or organization that has a proven, successful track record with recycling market development.

## 3.2 Non Profit Organizations

There are five non profit organizations in Nevada that focus their efforts on solid waste, recycling and waste reduction. These five non profits continue to educate the public about the importance of recycling, reuse and waste reduction.

**The Nevada Recycling Coalition** provides workshops, meetings and public events on recycling in Nevada. This northern Nevada group organized two seminars in 1998 with an emphasis on “buying recycled”. With funding from NDEP, the Nevada Recycling Coalition gathered recycling professionals from around the state to share information, network, and rejuvenate the energy of those interested in recycling in Nevada. The seminars, held in Reno and Las Vegas included representatives from US EPA, the American Plastics Council, the Buy Recycling Business Alliance, Assemblywoman Vivian Freeman, Senator Randolph Townsend, and Governor Kenny Guinn.

**The Great Basin Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America** (SWANA) was formed in 1997. This local organization, the Nevada affiliate of the national Solid Waste Association of North America, is composed of solid waste professionals, landfill operators, consultants, engineers, and others interested in integrated solid waste management in Nevada. The Great Basin Chapter currently has 51 members and is growing. The Great Basin Chapter will be hosting the 1999 National SWANA Exposition in October 1999 in Reno. The mission of this organization is to “advance the practice of environmentally and economically sound municipal solid waste management”.<sup>6</sup>

**Environmental Leadership** (EL) is dedicated to improving the community through environmental education. This Reno based organization is known for several programs offered throughout northern Nevada. One program is the Materials Exchange which helps reduce the amount of material being landfilled by providing an alternative and promoting reuse. All available materials can be accessed on their website ([www.environleader.org](http://www.environleader.org)). Environmental Leadership also operates a program called the Leaders of Waste Reduction (LOWR). The LOWR program

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works with businesses to develop environmentally beneficial waste management practices by designing waste reduction and recycling programs. This past year, in addition to working with local businesses, the LOWR program began to work with schools in Washoe County to implement recycling and waste reduction programs.

**Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful**, formerly known as Western Nevada Clean Communities, is dedicated to creating a cleaner, more beautiful region through education and active community involvement. This Reno based organization, an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, organizes Nevada Bell telephone book recycling throughout northern Nevada and Christmas tree recycling in Washoe County. Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful also sponsors “The Trash Lady”, a woman who visits schools in Washoe County and talks with kids about recycling. “The Trash Lady” has given recycling presentations to more than 10,000 school age children since 1994, one classroom at a time.

**The Nevada Recyclers Association**, located in southern Nevada, is focused on the dissemination of public information and associated educational and technical materials. The Nevada Recyclers Association represents businesses with a variety of recycling interests, primarily in southern Nevada.

### 3.3 Tire Revenue Distribution

The 1991 legislature created a \$1 per tire recycling fee to be charged at the sale of each retail tire sold in Nevada. The money generated from the sale of these tires creates a solid waste management account. NRS 444.616 requires the money to be used for solid waste management and to be divided as follows: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources receives 44.5%; Clark County Health District receives 30%; Washoe County District Health Department receives 25%; and the Department of Taxation receives 0.5%. Attachment A reflects the amount of funds distributed to each agency beginning with 1994. The revenue has steadily increased each year with FY98 generating close to \$1.2 million dollars.<sup>7</sup>

## 4.1 NDEP's Outreach Efforts

### Funding

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Each year, NDEP uses a portion of the funding received from the Solid Waste Management Account to develop contracts that encourage and support recycling, reuse and waste reduction activities throughout the state. Since NDEP began awarding funds for this purpose, in 1993, over \$750,000 has been distributed to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and the University and Community College System of Nevada.

In FY97, NDEP made \$111,000 available and in FY98 \$120,000 was available for contracts. Each year, a Request for Proposals is distributed throughout the state and all those eligible for funding have an equal opportunity to apply. Proposals are evaluated using a review committee and selected proposals are developed into contracts. Each contract is written with a specific scope of work and most contracts are for a one year period.

In an effort to be more successful, NDEP is changing the way contracts are developed between the agency and its contractors. NDEP will begin to work with contractors to develop a scope of work that will be more effective for both the municipality, or nonprofit and NDEP. NDEP hopes that this method will be a more successful way to develop effective programs that municipalities feel they need within their jurisdiction. Feedback from the recycling community has been in favor of this new way of approaching contract development. NDEP hopes this new approach will be more effective and encourage successful recycling and waste reduction programs.

### Training Opportunities

In 1998, NDEP offered funding to municipalities to attend solid waste and recycling training in Reno. This training, offered by the Solid Waste Association of North America, is offered all over the United States and was being offered in Nevada for the first time. Sixteen individuals from ten counties took advantage of NDEP's offer to pay for training and each of the attendees participated in the landfill operations and transfer station courses. Unfortunately, none of the counties were interested in attending the recycling training course, even though this was also eligible.

### Public Outreach

NDEP's recycling staff have participated in **Earth Day** for the past three years. A display board has been developed in an effort to educate the public about recycling and the importance of

buying recycled content products. Recycling staff have participated in judging Recycled Art Fairs at both Western Nevada Community College and Sierra Nevada College.

America celebrated the first “**America Recycles Day**” on November 15, 1997. Nevada participated in America Recycles Day with events in both the northern and southern parts of the state. National sponsors included Home Depot, Target Stores, McDonalds, the US Postal Service and a long list of businesses and agencies. Each of these sponsors advertised the event and many had displays of recycled content products in their stores. In Las Vegas, the Nevada Recyclers Association held an event at Home Depot stores, while in Reno, the Nevada Recycling Coalition offered tours of the Patagonia, Inc. distribution center along with presentations on recycling in Nevada. Events were videotaped by the local television stations, and newspapers contained articles and press releases advertising the events.

**Nevada Recycles Day** was born out of America Recycles Day, and on November 15, 1998, Nevada celebrated Nevada Recycles Day. In Reno, a poster contest was held for K-12 school kids in Washoe County. Over 100 entries were received and judged by representatives from Environmental Leadership, Sierra Pacific Power Company, Patagonia, Inc., and the Nevada Recycling Coalition. Winners were given \$50 savings bonds, donated by Sierra Pacific Power Company, and Patagonia jackets and hats, made from recycled plastic bottles. This event was covered by the local media, as well.

The Recycling Coordinator at NDEP has appeared on television several times on the local television show “**R Sierra.**” The 30 minute segments are shown on television throughout northern Nevada and each show discusses the importance of recycling and buying recycled content products.

### Nevada Recycling Hotline

NRS 444A.110 requires NDEP to provide a toll-free telephone number for the public to assist in the dissemination of recycling information. As a result, NDEP developed the Nevada Recycling Hotline. In 1995, this hotline was administered by a company in Arizona and was part of a national recycling hotline program but because of an overwhelming amount of problems with this set-up, NDEP did not renew the contract when it expired. Instead, NDEP decided to administer its own toll-free recycling hotline and answer the calls in-person, rather than use an automated system. In 1997, the **Nevada Recycling Hotline** was advertised to the public. News releases, public service announcements, and flyers were distributed. NDEP developed and

distributed magnets promoting the Nevada Recycling Hotline. From anywhere in Nevada, the public can dial **1-800-597-5865** and get information about recycling, household hazardous waste, and environmental events throughout the state. The public receives immediate, up-to-date answers to their recycling questions.

The number of calls to the Hotline increased over the past year with the greatest number of calls occurring in the late summer. See Attachment B. Most calls received are from apartment and condominium residents in the Las Vegas area. These callers don't have curbside recycling and want to know where they can drop off their recyclable materials. In addition to tracking the number of phone calls to the Nevada Recycling Hotline, NDEP may begin to track the types of recycling questions callers have.

## 5.1 Buy Recycled Policies

Recycling doesn't work unless consumers purchase products made from recycled materials. Purchasing products made from recycled materials is known as "closing the loop." The recycling community, especially at the national level, has focused its efforts on educating the public about the importance of buying recycled content products. The theme of the first America Recycles Day was "Keep Recycling Working: Buy Recycled." Sometimes, however, the cost of recycled content products is higher than those made from virgin materials. The demand for recycled content materials needs to grow to drive prices down. Large companies and agencies recognize they have the ability to make an impact on the demand for recycled content products and many have adopted "buy recycled" policies. The federal government is a leader in this effort and a new Federal Executive Order 13101 is now requiring all paper purchased by federal governments to be a minimum of 30% post-consumer content. All agencies and organizations receiving federal funds are also required to use 30% post-consumer recycled content paper on EPA related paperwork.

In Nevada, several agencies and organizations have adopted "buy recycled" policies. The Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID) was the first to adopt such a policy in Nevada. When recycled content products are available for purchase, IVGID will purchase that product, wherever feasible, over the one made from virgin material. In addition, they will purchase the recycled content product if the price is comparable, even if it's 10% more for the recycled content product. Currently, IVGID buys retread tires, remanufactured toner cartridges, recycled file folders, and all paper products have at least a 20% post-consumer content, some with as high as a 40% post consumer content.

Staff from the Solid Waste Management Authority of the Washoe County District Health Department developed a "buy recycled" policy and Washoe County adopted it in February 1998. As a result, the County requires that all contracts for paper require the use of recycled paper and the chasing arrow symbol to be included. The county requires all contractors and consultants to use recycled paper and to print on both sides of the paper. Along with the purchasing and procurement procedures, waste reduction measures within Washoe County departments and offices must be implemented to conserve natural resources and reduce energy utilization. All equipment bought, leased or rented must be compatible with the use of source reduction and recycled products, and all offices, departments, contractors and grantees are expected to comply with the policy.<sup>8</sup> The county purchases re-refined oil, retread tires, recycled content office products, and recycled paper products.

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The University of Nevada Las Vegas also has adopted a “buy recycled” policy for remanufactured toner cartridges.

The state has not adopted a “buy recycled” policy and although NRS 333.4603 through 333.4609 allow for the purchase of recycled material, there are no requirements to choose the recycled content products over those made from virgin materials. Corporate Express (the contractor working with State Purchasing) does have some recycled content products available through their catalog.

The Nevada State Purchasing Division is only required to purchase recycled content paper if it meets certain conditions listed in NRS 333.4609. State Purchasing has purchased recycled content paper in the past, however, the paper does not perform well. Unfortunately, recycled content products that do not perform well give other recycled content products a bad reputation and people become hesitant to use them. In many instances, agencies are required to use recycled content paper. As required in the 1993 Federal Executive Order 12873 and the 1998 Federal Executive Order 13101, agencies and organizations that receive federal funds are required to use 30% post-consumer recycled content paper for all correspondence and reports.

## 5.2 Recycling Rate

Each year, Nevada measures the amount of material collected for recycling in the state. NRS 444A.050 requires counties to report to the state information about the number of tons of material “disposed” (referring to the material that has been recycled.) This information has been collected since June 1993. It used to be collected and recorded for a fiscal year and in 1997 the reporting period was changed to a calendar year.

In an effort to assist counties to collect recycling information from recycling centers, NDEP asked the Environmental Commission to create NAC 444A.135. This regulation is intended to give municipalities some authority to collect the recycling information they need to report a county recycling rate to the state. In addition, NDEP recognized that most businesses operate on a calendar year, so the due date listed in NAC 444A.140 was changed to allow adequate time to collect information for the recycling reports.

Calculating an accurate state or county recycling rate is a challenge nationwide. There are many different reporting procedures and methods of calculation. In an effort to provide a

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consistent way to calculate a recycling rate, the US Environmental Protection Agency developed guidelines for measuring recycling. In 1998, NDEP hosted a satellite downlink training session, sponsored by the US EPA. NDEP staff and several county representatives attended the training to learn how to improve calculation methods. As a result, NDEP developed a standard form to be used by each business and county participating in the recycling rate calculation. Last year, five counties participated in the recycling rate calculation: Washoe, Clark, Carson, Douglas and Humboldt Counties. Elko County has not participated in the past two years, but they promise to participate this year.

NRS. 444A.020 requires that each municipality work toward recycling 25% of the total solid waste generated within that municipality. So far, no municipality in Nevada has achieved that goal, however, the recycling rate has trended upwards over the last few years. The 1997 recycling rate was 14%. (Attachment C shows a breakdown of types of materials collected by weight. ) 1998 information is still being collected and the 1998 recycling rate will not be known until after April 1, 1999. Each year, Nevada gets better at calculating an accurate recycling rate. Counties get better at including more businesses and businesses get better reporting information to counties. Although Nevada has not reached the 25% recycling goal, when compared to other western states with similar demographics, Nevada is right on target with our current recycling rate. Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming each have similar demographics and similar recycling rates.

### Full Time Recycling Positions

There are only a handful of people in Nevada who are paid to focus their time and energy on recycling. At the state level, there are two full time positions, a Recycling Coordinator and a Recycling Program Assistant. These two positions are located within the Division of Environmental Protection. There are no other full or part-time recycling coordinators in the state. The Incline Village General Improvement District has a full-time Conservation Coordinator, however the duties of that position vary. At the county level, recycling duties usually fall on the shoulders of Public Works Directors, City Managers, County Commissioners, or road department employees. Recycling is usually an "other assigned duty." Both health districts have staff devoted to solid waste but neither has a full time recycling person. Washoe County District Health Department requested a Recycling Coordinator position in 1998 but as stated earlier, that request was denied.

## 6.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

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## Conclusions

Nevada is making some progress toward achieving the recycling goal. There are many challenges to overcome before recycling will thrive in Nevada. Nevada lacks the infrastructure that will support recycling collection, processing, and manufacturing. There are no incentives for manufacturers to use locally recycled materials, nor are there incentives for local manufacturers to convert to recycled feedstocks. The absence of local manufacturers that use locally recycled materials as their feedstocks requires that all recyclables be transported out of state. With the relatively low population and large geographic area, the quantity of materials generated and transporting those materials to a market are challenges.

There must be adequate opportunity for recycling businesses to collect materials without the threat of violating a franchise agreement. The benefit of a franchise agreement is that waste and recyclables are managed properly. Each county has the right to award a franchise, however, it would be beneficial to recycling in Nevada if franchise agreements included language that excluded recyclable materials from exclusive collection. Franchise agreements should also require franchisees to conduct frequent public education and outreach programs. Adding this language to a franchise agreement should encourage competition among recycling businesses thereby creating a higher level of recycling services provided to local residents. Allowing other businesses to collect recyclable materials, even if they are not source-separated, could encourage a wider variety of businesses to collect recyclables.

And finally, Nevada's recycling statutes do not sufficiently encourage recycling in Nevada. The current statutes place the responsibility to recycle on the residential sector; there is no requirement or incentive for businesses to recycle. The commercial sector must bear some responsibility to recover recyclable materials. This would help Nevada recover more recyclable materials and increase the recycling rate. The Nevada Revised Statutes that address recycling and waste reduction should be revisited and updated to further encourage recycling collection, manufacturing, and the purchasing of recycled content products.

In addition, Nevada does not have a strong "buy recycled" policy for state agencies. Although there are now several county agencies using "buy recycled" policies, state agencies have not taken the lead. To encourage the purchase of recycled content products, agencies from the city, county and state, as well as the University and Community College System of Nevada should be required to spend a portion of their budget on recycled content products. These agencies purchase in large quantities and can help stimulate the demand for recycled content products and

help lower the cost, as well. Washoe County's "Buy Recycled" policy includes background information that begin with the words: "Government must lead by example." The State of Nevada should follow that advice and lead by example, as well.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are arranged into three categories:

- 1) recommendations for Legislature;
- 2) recommendations for local governments;
- 3) recommendations for NDEP.

### 1. Recommendations for Legislature

- ◆ Revisit all Nevada Revised Statutes pertaining to recycling, waste reduction and reuse and update where necessary to encourage recycling and recycling market development..
- ◆ Change NRS 0.050 to address changes in population as the state grows. Use the State demographer's most recent estimate to determine populations thresholds for minimum county recycling services.
- ◆ Provide incentives to encourage businesses to use locally recycled material as feedstock. Encourage economic development authorities to play an active role in this process.
- ◆ Create additional tax incentives for recycling manufacturers to relocate to Nevada.
- ◆ Support and expand "Buy Recycled" efforts statewide. Update statutes to require a portion of a purchasing budget be spent on recycled products. Encourage cooperative purchasing agreements to lower costs.
- ◆ Require the State Purchasing Division to provide a variety of good quality recycled content products, including paper products with a minimum 30% post-consumer content.
- ◆ Under NRS 444A.040, which concerns county recycling programs, add a requirement that each county of greater than 100,000 population establish a full-time recycling coordinator.
- ◆ Provide legislative, financial and philosophical support for existing recycling programs.

### 2. Recommendations for Local Governments

- ◆ Create incentives for residents to participate in recycling programs. Increase the number of convenient recycling opportunities available.

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- ◆ Re-negotiate franchise agreements to include language that promotes recycling in all sectors of the economy and guards against limitations to the full development of recycling infrastructure and markets.
- ◆ Insist that frequent and effective public education be a condition of operation of all franchise agreements.
- ◆ Provide financial and philosophical support for existing recycling programs.

### 3. Recommendations for NDEP

- ◆ Educate legislators, county commissioners, city managers and other decision makers about the importance, value and appropriate methods of recycling.
- ◆ Continue to develop and support recycling education programs.
- ◆ Provide financial and philosophical support for existing recycling programs.
- ◆ Continue to provide financial support to encourage the development of recycling opportunities and recycling education programs.
- ◆ Continue to be a resource to those involved in recycling in Nevada.







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